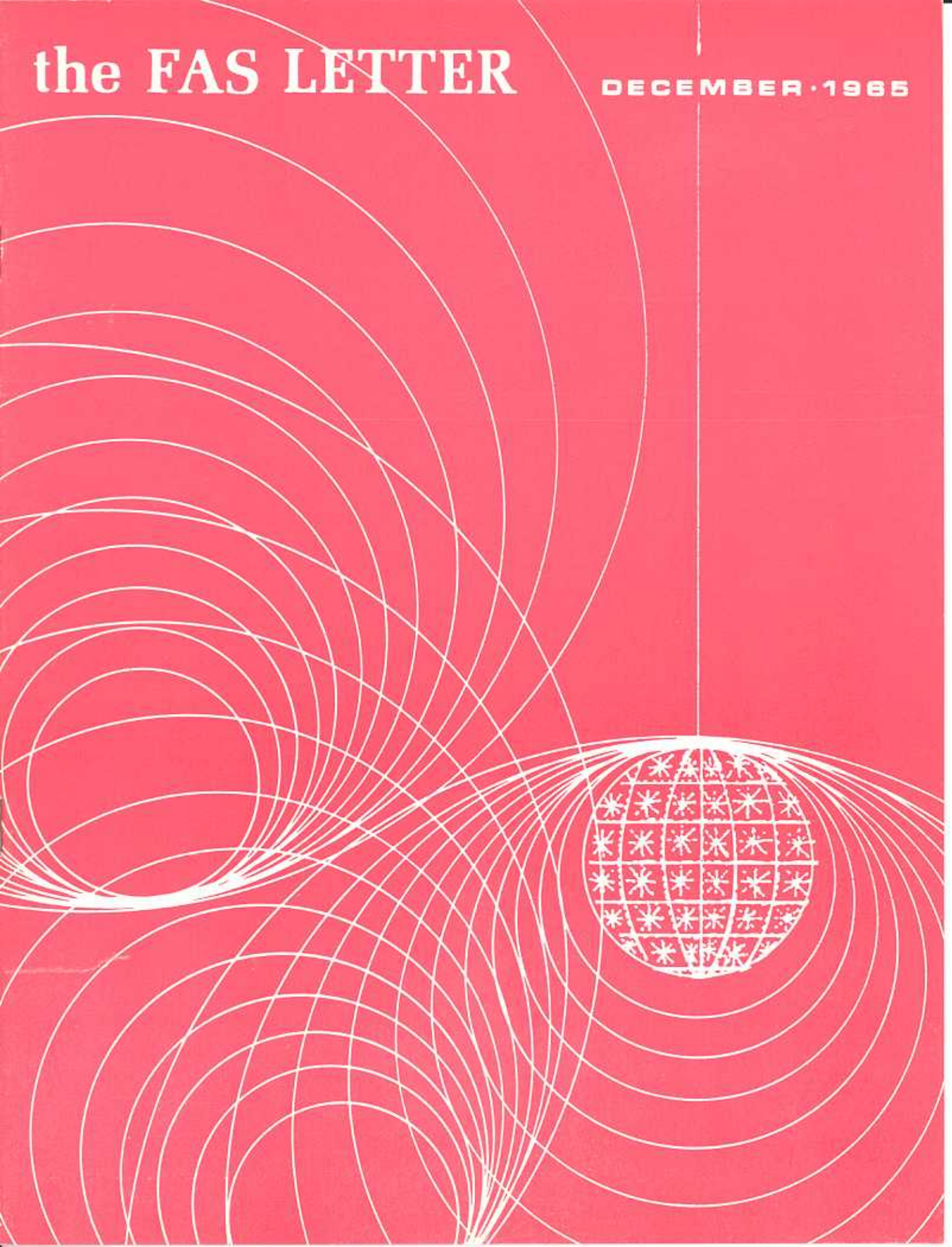


the FAS LETTER

DECEMBER 1985



This has been a long and demanding year for all of us -- especially for Attaches and their home and office families. And it is sometimes difficult to tell you exactly why it is that new jobs have to be piled on top of old.

However, one communication that is loud and clear and well-deserved is "Merry Christmas" from your FAS family in Washington.

Reg. Traves

Christmas

AT CHRISTMASTIME . . . customs differ and climates vary from one FAS post to another.

But in every land the seasonal traditions center on the family and its symbols of security -- the hearth and home.

It thus seems appropriate to devote much of this Letter's space to the children and families of our attache staffs abroad . . . and to some of the motifs and gala decorations that typify the festive season.



Winter is the common denominator for many Yuletide ornaments: snow, icicles, evergreen trees, sleds, and snowballs.

Then there are the religious symbols: Christ Child, Madonna, manger, star, shepherds, Wise Men, angels, and the dove.



Fruits of the land -- including vegetables, flowers, and food -- have always been popular Christmas motifs. (Gilded apples are the earliest recorded ornaments for the Christmas tree.)



And, of course, there'll always be Santa Claus and Father Christmas, with their sacks, packages, reindeer and sleigh, dolls and toys.

For the unusual in Yule news and decor, let's turn to the following by-line reports from representative posts:



MISS USDA -- FAS's own Marty Payne, of General Sales Manager's office, pauses during her Christmas shopping to admire an ornament from Mexico. The "international" tree, with decorations from many nations, is part of the Julius Garfinckel store's seasonal theme: Christmas 'Round the World.

PEACE DOVE AND SNOW MAIDEN
à la Russe.



Moscow

December 25 doesn't appear in red on the official Soviet calendar. But many of our seasonal customs are reflected when the big Soviet New Year Festival is celebrated the first week of January.

There's the New Year's tree ('course we know it's a Christmas tree). Its gay decorations - including plain colored balls and sometimes electric lights of varied shapes and sizes - often take the form of corn, green peppers, egg plant, pickles, mushrooms, radishes: everything for a crisp vegetable salad!

Most entrancing of all are the papier maché figures dressed in so many ways. Aside from the Snow Maiden and Grandfather Frost, there are astronauts, cosmonauts, little girls bundled up for winter snows, grandmother Baboushka, and figures in regional dress.

'S Rozhestvom Khristovym!

*Wilma Meeker
Wife of Agricultural Attache
Moscow*



GRANDFATHER FROST doll is unwrapped by Eleanor Kaniecki, Moscow attache secretary, preparatory to trimming of Christmas tree.



OH, CHRISTMAS TREE! Here are Kem, 8, and Lara, 6 -- daughters of Attache and Mrs. Brice Meeker -- putting Russian ornaments on a Christmas tree in the Embassy courtyard, Moscow. (Note pickle and mushroom toward center.)

The outdoor tree, a Colorado spruce, is part of the "beautification" plantings made a year ago by former assistant attache, Keith Severin.



Though Turkey is a Moslem country, in recent years shopkeepers have begun decorating their windows in a Christmas theme -- snowflakes, Santas, chimneys, and stockings.

We can even buy a local form of holly for only 25 cents an armful. On close inspection, we're startled to see that the red berries have been hand-tied with thin thread to the green foliage!

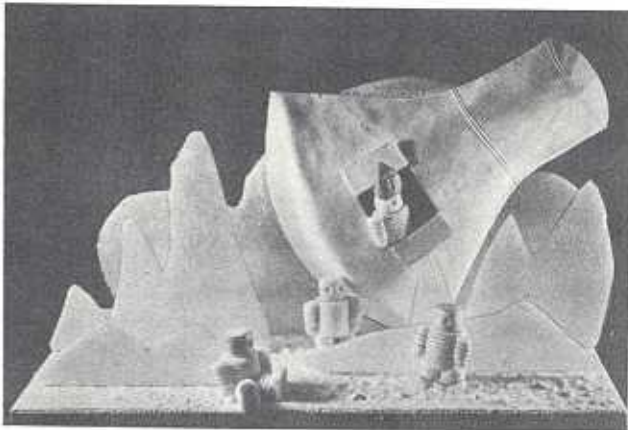
*Loyd Adcock
Agricultural Attache
Ankara*

The Hague

THE DUTCH outdo themselves in the pastry and confectionary lines as St. Nicholas Day (December 5) approaches. Rich "speculaas" cookies and "marzipan" are everywhere -- and it's a temptation to keep from indulging as well as decorating with them.

The "speculaas," often molded into entrancing figures, have a taste that reminds me of my native New England "hermits". A lot goes in-

ST. NICK IN SPACE. Marzipan, a confection heavy with crushed almonds and calories, is molded by the Dutch into a space capsule covered with silver paper. A very sweet St. Nick sports a red mitre.



to them -- cooked apple slices, many spices, slivvered almonds, and, above all, finely crushed stale cookie crumbs saved for a year by Dutch bakers. They act as a binder and add a certain something to taste and texture.

Zalig Kersfeest!

Donna Lee Hersey
Ass't Agricultural Attache
The Hague



DUTCH CONFECTIONARY figures called "vrijers" (sweethearts) were originally used as our Valentines were. A boy showed interest by sending a man's figure to the object of his affection. A girl, if interested, would return a woman's figure. Nowadays, the exchange -- including chocolate or pastry letters of first-name initials -- extends to family and friends at Christmastime.

THE FAS LETTER

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Editor: AUDREY COOK
Rm. 5916, South Bldg.
Ext. 4928

Merry
Christmas



THE WINNER! Pamela Phillips (left), 12-year-old daughter of Assistant Agricultural Attache Stanley W. Phillips and Mrs. Phillips, crosses the finish line as champion of the 50-yard dash at American International School's sports day in New Delhi. The ultra-modern school, with 650 students in 12 grades, was largely financed with P. L. 480 rupees.

As Christmas approaches, **Bombay** will take on an unusual and beautiful glow from a multitude of illuminated paper stars appearing from many windows and porches.

There aren't any Christmas trees on this tropical side of the high Indian mountains. But one American mother has ordered a tree to be airshipped from the U. S.

Our own family may, or more likely may not, repeat the Christmas Eve elephant ride we took last year through the Mudumalai game reserve in the border mountains between Madras and Mysore states in South India -- where wild animals abound.

We got to the starting point in dusk and rain, and asked where the elephant was. Our little hill-tribe guide said, "He's hiding."

But Vikarman, the elephant, soon showed up. After he was fitted with a saddle made of boards, iron, and old rubber tires, we were off. My good wife Mae was a bit reticent about climbing aboard, but son Kirk easily persuaded her when he said:

"Just think, Mom. You'll be the only woman of Arlington County riding an elephant on Christmas Eve!"

(The ride qualifies as one of the world's biggest travel bargains: 3 hours for \$3 for an entire family.)

Bob Evans
Agricultural Officer
Bombay

INDIA

HAPPY QUINTET are the children of D. R. Gulati, chief agricultural analyst of the Delhi attache office, as they celebrate the birthday of Sushma (sitting right) on October 28th -- which happened to be the 20th anniversary of her father's association with FAS.

Lalita, 17, and her brother Praveen, 15, are standing. Seated (l. to r.) are Muneesh, 14, Rajani, 7, and Sushma, 10.



What is Christmas like in

New Delhi?

A brass band at your portal will probably awaken you. And, of course, you'll tip the band-leader when you answer the subsequent ringing of the door bell.

Then you'll have a bit of tea, and dispense some sympathy and rupees, as many Indian ex-servants and friends drop in during the day. And you'll feel like a manaraja when admirers garland you with fresh flowers!

Christmas in New Delhi offers a unique opportunity to both give and take, and to get very close to the true meaning -- as well as the true joyfulness -- of the season.



For the American FAS staff in Delhi, the holiday will be largely a veterans' day: the third Christmas in India for the Packards, and the second for the Boulwares and Phillips. For Frieda Weimer, it will be a new experience, after tours of duty in Western Europe.



Roosevelt House, official residence of Ambassador and Mrs. Bowles, will be the official venue of much entertainment for all U.S. Mission employees and their families. The Embassy itself will be gay with special lighting and The Christmas Tree.

EXPLORING the rocks of Buddha Jayanti Park -- a popular recreation center on the outskirts of New Delhi -- are the sons of D. V. Khosla, agricultural analyst: Rajesh, 6 (at left) and Rajiv, 9.



PATRIARCH P. K. NATHAN, research analyst in Delhi attache office, sits (in Diwali dress) at center of his family, l. to r.: Ponnuswamy, Kalyani, Mrs. Nathan, Jaganathan, Krishnaswamy, Nathan, Meenakshi, Thiagarajan -- and (behind Nathan) his brother Somu and Somu's wife, Prema.

Daughter Kalyani Nathan is now studying economics and political science as a freshman in a girls' college. Sons are in the 8th, 7th, 5th, and 2nd elementary school grades, respectively; and the "baby" daughter is in kindergarten. (Mr. Nathan has been with us since December 20, 1947.)

WEDDING BELLS, TOO

The festive mood began, perhaps, back in October when Manmohan Singh Takkar, of our staff, gave up his bachelor status at Rohtak, in Punjab.

Attache and Mrs. Boulware led the official wedding delegation on the 40-mile trip from the groom's home to the ceremony. The new Mrs. Nakkar has an M.A., as has her husband. Dutch Zalig Kersfeest!

Ross Packard
Ass't Agricultural Attache
New Delhi

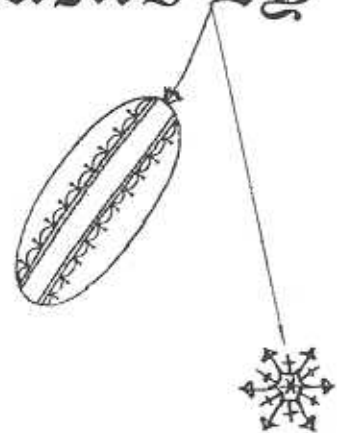


SANTA VISITS AFRICA.
Despite the heat, Santa (in background) drops into a nursery school party in Monrovia, Liberia. Among his happy guests is little Renate Williams (far left), daughter of Attache and Mrs. Dudley Williams.

CANDY LEIS are donned by the young Hatsuta boys -- Naoyuki, 7 (at left) and Tadahisa, 6. They are the sons of Kinya Hatsuta, FAS liaison assistant at the U.S. Trade Center in Tokyo.



FAMILY



"A LITTLE CHILD SHALL LEAD THEM."
Nopadol, new-born son of agricultural assistant Tammanoon Premsoontorn, draws together the children of the Bangkok attache staff. L. to r.: Naraporn, Kamjornchai, and Araya Kunalai -- daughters and son of Bhornchai Kunalai, marketing specialist -- and of Taratorn Premsoontorn.



A MERRY CHRISTMAS is in sight for the merry Murray family in Bonn, Germany. Here, Papa Ken Murray, assistant attache, and his wife, Barbara, pose with their young ones a month before Christmas. L. to r.; Patrick, 6; Kathleen, 7; Paul, 2; Karin, 3 months; Phyllis, 7; and Brenda, 4.



PHOTOS

MADRID shopping spree finds the Crawford family ready a go-go. Attache Doug Crawford and Mrs. Crawford, shielded from Spain's winter sun, are easily recognizable. Sons (l. to r.) are Steven, 15, Kevin, 13, and Frederick, 9.

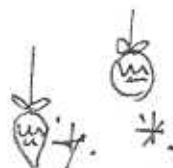


THREE CONTINENTS are represented in this trio of family snapshots:

Above left, IN LISBON, Emilie Thomasson seems to be enjoying life at the post where her father is attache. She was one year old in November.

Below left, IN SAN SALVADOR, twins Linda and Christie pose with their parents, Attache and Mrs. Dick Smith.

Above, IN LEOPOLDVILLE, a glittering Christmas tree fashioned by Attache Paul Ferree (before his transfer to Morocco) forms background for sons Patrick, 8; Robert, 7; and John, 3.





Sweden

Christmas is called "Jul" in Sweden. And Yul-docka (straw dolls in many forms) are favorite tree ornaments as well as table decorations.

The julbock, a jolly Christmas he-goat, is most popular of all. There are many stories about his origin; but he's been wandering around for several centuries in Europe, and has been especially active in Uppland, just north of Stockholm.



SWEDISH JULBOCK, merry straw goat, is at top of the list as a Christmas ornament.

A comic figure, he's sometimes taken along by Christmas merry-makers and carolers, as a none-too-welcome bearer of "truths". Often he carries some verification alluding to people's conduct. So he has become a figure in social life, as an alerter to the difference between good and bad.

Today's julbock of straw, with all his trimmings, is found in nearly every Swedish home and on many trees during the Yule season.

Glad Yul!

Margaret Söderström
Agricultural Assistant
Copenhagen

AGILE DAG FROSTENSON tries out his skis on an early snow in Copenhagen. He's the son of veteran agricultural economist George Frostenson, of FAS attache staff.



Mexico

Red poinsettias, doves, and beautiful "nacimientos" (cribs) symbolize the Mexican Christmas season -- not Christmas Day, but the eve before (miso de gallo).

Each Mexican home has its own heirloom manger in a complete miniature village of Bethlehem. Greatest care is taken with all details:

One thrills to the sight of mirror "lakes," petite palm trees, farmyards ... women tossing laundry onto low bushes, or grinding corn for tortillas ... native broomsweepers ... shepherds bearing lambs down the mountain slopes to pay homage to the new-born King.

And, of course there's the manger scene itself, complete with census-takers who assess the Rooms at the Inn. Miniature "props" include wee candles, snow, grass, and the tiniest of white doves.

Doves (palomitas) and gay poinsettias are oft seen as Christmas decorations.

Felix Navidad!

April Arkus
Sec'y to Agricultural Attache
Mexico City

FESTIVE season and joy of youth are epitomized by Senorita Maria Isabel Cabrera Fuente, daughter of Embassy photographer in Mexico City who takes many of our official FAS pictures.





OLD YEAR SPICE

When bells ring out the Old Year, they will also ring down the curtain on several long careers of service.

Lazar Volin, who joined FAS in the year of its founding, is bowing out after nearly 40 years with USDA -- starting in the foreign section of the old BAE and ending with the relatively new ERS. His specialty through the years has been the agriculture of the USSR and other East European areas. His first retirement project will be putting the finishing touches on his book, History of Russian Agrarian Policy.

Louise Fillius, a "charter" member of FAS, is retiring after 41 years of government service. She was a longtime liaison between the State Department and FAS in the communications field, and in recent years has been a valued member of our Management Services Division.

"Ernie" Hayes (Ernest J.) is another veteran who is bidding adieu at year's end, with over 30 years of duty. After service with Federal Crop Insurance and War Food Administration, he spent 12 years in the Office of the Secretary. In recent years, he's been with Trade Projects Division.

Among other in FAS and closely related agencies who have retired in recent weeks, or indicate "retirement intentions" are:

FAS -- Ted Baggett (longtime cotton specialist); Aurelia Gross (Operations Analysis), Reva Berlin (Tobacco), Thelma Divver (General Sales Manager's), and Hugh M. Dennis (Management Services).

ERS -- Pat O'Donnell and Geniana Edwards.

IADS -- Mr. and Mrs. Ross Silcott (she is the former Ruth Ethridge), J. Dennett Guthrie, and Joe Riddle.

